

Understanding Internet Call Centre



How the world shares ideas.

The Web page is today's storefront where customers interact with your business. Few companies can afford to meet one-on-one with each customer. Instead, consumers and businesses are turning to the Internet. Potential customers are using the Internet to view goods and services, making the Internet a preferred, cost-effective method to interact with customers.

However, there is a danger in this new way of doing business. Good and bad impressions are being made – depending on how well the interaction goes.

Providing a positive Web experience can create loyal customers, retain good customers, and become a major competitive advantage. On the other hand, providing bad customer service could be the death of a company. Companies need to get this new way of interacting correct, so that customers leave with a good impression.

Businesses must decide how to handle the new medium of the Internet and Web pages. A short time ago, all you needed to efficiently provide customer support was the ability to handle incoming telephone calls – a well defined and limited interaction. The Web has changed this dynamic. But it's not enough to simply provide a Web page. Customers still prefer the **human interaction of a call centre.**

The solution is a marriage of the **Internet and call centres that provides** Web pages with an interactive option. The Internet has added multimedia communications (e-mail, voice, text chat, or any combination that solves the customer's problem) to the role of call centres. Nortel Networks, with its **Symposium portfolio of solutions designed for unified customer care**, can help businesses meet the challenge of bringing the best of both worlds – the Internet and call centre – together.

The Changing Call Centre

The traditional reasons for creating a **Call Centre are just as valid in the Internet age.** These include:

- Providing an outlet for goods and services. This can replace or augment traditional “brick and mortar” storefronts.
- Increasing revenue by improving customer satisfaction. Customers that have a good service experience or find it easy to get answers are more likely to become repeat customers. Call centres provide a way to reduce “customer churn” by making it easier for the customer to engage and communicate with you.
- Saving costs. Call centres are a cost effective way to reach a large market.

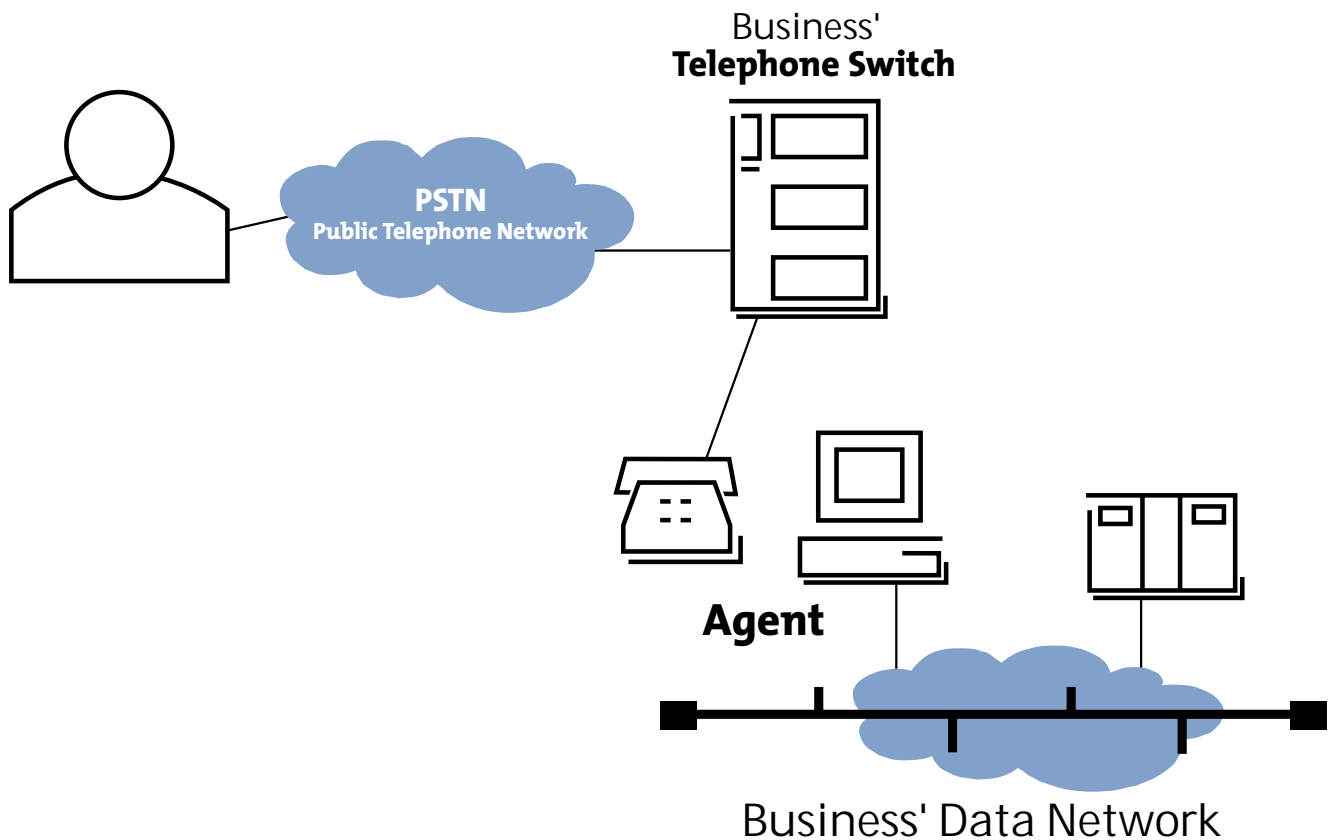


Figure 1: Traditional Call Centre Architecture

- **Providing customer service.** Call centres provide a way to increase your responsiveness by being accessible when the customer needs to reach you. Operating the call centre – 7 days a week, and 24 hours a day – provides customer support that would be difficult or impossible without a call centre.

Traditional call centres have been based on customers calling a toll-free number and either talking to a customer service representative or by going through menus. This is called Interactive Voice Response (IVR). Since everyone had a telephone, this has been an effective way to run a call centre.

The architecture for a traditional call centre is shown in Figure 1. The customer calls the business' toll-free number. The business' telephone switch (PBX), and Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) unit – such as Nortel Networks' Meridian – switches the call to a call centre agent or computer that provides the IVR support. The agent enters information into the computer, which accesses information stored in servers or mainframe computers over the corporate data network. This model has worked very well, because it doesn't require the customer to understand computers and puts the agent in control of the conversation.

The growth of the Internet provides a new dimension to the job of the call centre. The call centre needs to accommodate consumers using the Internet that provides a way for Internet customers to reach the company. The Internet is bringing new dimensions and new business opportunities worldwide, as these statistics from Forrester Research and J.P. Morgan Research demonstrate:

- By the year 2002, the combined value of consumer and business-to-business commerce on the Internet is expected to grow to \$435.1 billion.
- Business-to-business e-commerce alone is expected to grow from \$17 billion in 1998 to \$372 billion in 2002.

- The cost-savings potential is staggering. In the travel business, for example, the cost per transaction for an airline reservation can shrink from \$8 to \$1. By moving a banking transaction from a teller to the Web, the cost shrinks from \$1.05 to one cent.
- The traditional purchase order can cost \$50 to generate, while its e-business equivalent costs \$5. Accounts payable traditional costs are roughly \$0.80 to \$1.50, while they are only \$0.40 to \$0.60 through e-business.

Companies cannot expect to just put up a Web site and watch the money flow in. They still need to interact with the customer and build effective relationships. A company must bring the benefits of the call centre to the Internet environment. This is the role of Internet Call Centres.

Internet Call Centres are both evolutionary and revolutionary. They are evolutionary because they are just one more way to reach the customers. All the lessons learned in running a traditional call centre apply to Internet Call Centres. They are revolutionary because of the amount of information and the experience you can now bring to the customer, with help from Web pages augmenting the conversation.

Businesses need to combine the Web and call centre to capture the full benefits of the new media of the Internet. One of the problems with many Web sites is that when the customer has a question, it must be answered before they complete the purchase. If the customer is unable to get an immediate answer, the result is either lost business or an unhappy customer. Adding Internet Call Centre solves the problem. Combining Web pages and call centres allows customers to see the information-rich Web page and get their questions answered immediately.

For example, consider customers who buy airline tickets on a Web site. They find the flights and price but are concerned about seating and meals. With a traditional Web site, they may abandon the transaction after not finding

the information. They then call the airline and conduct the transaction the traditional way. The airline loses, because they paid for the transaction twice – once the Internet and again at the call centre. They also run the risk that the customer may use a competitor. Having seen your information, the call may go to a competitor to find out what they offer.

Adding an Internet Call Centre to the mix can eliminate some of these problems. Customers using the Web page have ways to ask their questions. They get questions answered by communicating with the airline's Internet Call Centre and complete the transaction. The cost of handling is reduced, because the Internet Call Centre was able to respond directly to the customer questions, thereby completing the transaction in fewer steps. The customer feels good about the airline because their questions were answered promptly – leading to customer loyalty.

The Web allows customers to help themselves. The customer has control over the rate and direction of their inquiry and are left with a positive feeling. This is important because customers with a positive experience are likely to use the site again and tell others about it. Furthermore, Web self-service transactions can save the company significant amounts of money. A Booz-Allen & Hamilton study found that insurance companies that used a Web site for self-service versus traditional telephone transactions reduced the cost of the transaction by 58-71%. The study also found that for banking institutions, the cost saving was 98%.

Of course, not all transactions can be completely self-service. There are cases where human assistance is needed. This is particularly true for complex situations involving problem resolution and decision making. Additionally, the company may want one of their agents involved if a real-time conversation with the customer can be turned into a valuable marketing opportunity. An Internet Call Centre makes this possible.

Businesses need to either create Internet Call Centres or add the Internet option to their existing call centres. Nortel Networks' Internet Call Centre solution meets the challenge of the Internet age while retaining the benefits of the traditional call centre. It allows businesses to reach their Internet-based customers in the manner that best suits their needs in a cost-effective way. The Internet Call Centre is based on a combination of the existing Nortel Networks telephone switch, call management hardware and software, and award winning data networking capabilities that can be combined for the customer using Nortel Networks' Professional Services group. The Internet Call Centre allows a business to build a centre that supports customers – no matter how they decide to interact with the business.

Who Needs an Internet Call Centre

Internet Call Centres provide a competitive advantage to both consumer-oriented businesses and enterprises that focus on selling to other businesses. Just about any business can benefit from the Internet Call Centre. The list includes:

- Businesses with an Internet presence. Internet Call Centre can provide a competitive advantage over businesses that use only static Web pages.
- Companies that have been successful with traditional call centres. They can add Internet Call Centres to their existing call centres to serve the growing group of Internet customers and reach out to new customers.
- Businesses that, in the past, may have decided a call centre was not practical for their product or industry. This could mean a product that is too complicated or that the buyer needs to see before buying. Internet Call Centres, combined with the power of the Web, change these dynamics. For example, a business could provide pictures of their product. If the customer needs to see a

diagram while being walked through a procedure, the Internet Call Centre agent can have the customer look at a Web page or pages while they talk the customer through the procedure. If a problem is encountered, the agent can immediately pull up another Web page that addresses that problem.

- A business that wants to reach the new Internet consumer. This type of business will find that having an Internet Call Centre is critical to the success of their efforts. It is not enough to have just a Web page. Consumers, including business customers, need to ask questions before they are willing to buy. Potential sales may be lost if you don't have an Internet Call Centre.
- Companies that have invested in Web sites. Companies that already use the web will find that adding an Internet Call Centre to the mix will increase customer satisfaction.
- Companies that want to be on the cutting edge of the Internet. Businesses and consumer customers are increasingly expecting information to be available on the Internet. An Internet Call Centre will become an expected part of the Internet experience. Companies that don't provide the option will be viewed as buyer unfriendly and be at a competitive disadvantage.

As businesses on the Internet continue to evolve, more uses for an Internet Call Centre will emerge. The key point is that Internet Call Centres are increasingly becoming a requirement for doing business successfully on the Web.

Internet Call Centre Building Blocks

The basic idea behind an Internet Call Centre is that when people view the company's Web site they can contact the company to ask questions. There are four different options available on

how the person contacts the company. They are:

- E-mail
- Interactive text chat
- Telephone call back
- Real-time telephone conversation

The right option depends on your individual needs, goals and the type of customers you're trying to reach. Companies that don't want to staff a real-time call centre should consider the e-mail option. E-mails can be sent at any time of day or night, but the answer can be generated during the next business day. This allows customers the option to ask their question while providing the business with the lowest cost option.

There are many cases where more than e-mail is needed. It doesn't allow the you to close the sale or sell additional items, and is less effective when the question deals with complex procedures or decision making. For these and many other situations, it is best to consider one of the real time options. Expert help is available from Nortel Networks' Professional Service group that has answered the "which is best" question for many businesses.

By definition, the Internet Call Centre adds a way for customers to reach and communicate with your business through your Web page. Customers reach your business by e-mail, interactive text chat, a telephone call-back, or having a conversation with an agent over the Internet or via telephone as they surf your Web page.

The heart of Nortel Networks' Internet Call Centre is the Symposium server. The Symposium server controls and manages the flow of information between the Internet Call Centre agents and the customer. Based on industry standards, it allows you to implement the pieces that best fit with the company's needs and strategy. The following sections show how each of the four different options works, and how the Symposium service fits into the picture.

E-mail

The simplest way to support Internet customers is by providing e-mail or a Web form. Customers use e-mail much like they used letter writing, except that it is easier for the customer and there is a higher likelihood that they will send in their question. It is implemented by putting a “send questions” or “contact us” button on the Web pages where customers may want to ask questions. If the goal is to encourage customers to write, then the button (or tab) should be placed on the same place on all the appropriate pages.

Figure 2 shows how the e-mail process works. The customer clicks on the e-mail button, and then:

1. The Web server sends down a Web form with required text fields or an e-mail form.
2. The customer fills out the Web form or types in their request and clicks on the Send button. The e-mail is sent over the Internet to the Web server, and then delivered to Symposium.
3. Symposium receives the e-mail and routes it to the agent best able to answer it.
4. The agent then inserts a pre-scripted response or creates a new response. The agent can also insert an attachment and save the new answer for use in the standard library of responses. By clicking on a button, the agent sends the response to the customer as a traditional e-mail using the e-mail address supplied by the customer.
5. The customer receives the answer along with their other e-mail messages.

There are many cases where e-mail is a good solution, including:

- Customers who don't want to or can't talk to someone at that time (i.e. they are using their telephone line for the Internet connection or the speed is too slow).
- They could be outside the business' normal calling area or normal business hours.

- They don't want to discuss anything, but merely want additional information that is best sent to them as a document.
- They may need to send documentation to the business (as an e-mail attachment) before they are ready to talk about the problem.
- It could be a very technical question in which they know the correct person is not likely to be available.
- They want a document trail that e-mail provides, because they need to share the information with others.

The goal of e-mail is identical to the service provided by a traditional call centre, **but there are important organisational implications.** With e-mail, you don't have to have a dedicated call centre staff. Hiring, training, and managing an Internet Call Centre for e-mail could make it an unaffordable option. An option is to let existing employees handle the e-mail. This can make an e-mail Internet Call Centre an affordable option while providing the customer with the best service.

The biggest issue the business must face is that handling e-mail is not as cost-efficient as a traditional call centre. It takes more time to answer e-mail messages than to handle the question over the telephone. A good estimate is that it will take twice as long to answer an e-mail as a telephone call.

Also, a business may have to use different agents for the e-mail and telephone. The person answering the e-mail may need a higher skill set than a traditional call centre agent. The e-mail agent must be able to answer the question as well as the call centre agent, but will also need good writing skills. It is important that the answer be well written, because poorly written e-mail answers can create a negative impression. Finally, e-mail agents must be able to navigate the business' Web site. They will need to find what the customer was viewing on the Web site and refer the customer to additional Web pages when responding to their questions.

There are two ways to reduce the cost of handling e-mail. The first is by developing automatic responses. Symposium can be integrated with artificial intelligence software to further automate the response. A knowledge base can be used to immediately respond to a customer's question based on keyword searches and answers to questions. Software scans the message and generates a standard answer. This is analogous to Frequently Asked Questions with the software responding to the question. This requires analysis of the questions as well as software set-up time, but can be a cost effective way to reduce labour expenses. Companies that host a “contact us” button or e-mail link on their Web site should seriously consider using automated response software in conjunction with their e-mail system. When the customer clicks on the e-mail button they are asked a series of questions, analogous to Interactive Voice Response (IVR). This can narrow down the exact answer a customer is looking for, as opposed to receiving a broad and generic response.

A second way to reduce the cost is by responding to the e-mail with a voice file. The agent records their answer as a voice file and sends the file with the e-mail. Windows software has a built-in function for playing back the answer. This option allows someone with the same skill set as a telephone agent to handle the e-mail. This approach requires the receiver to have a PC that can play sound (this is not too big a risk since most PC's produced in the last few years have speakers). A variation on this approach is to use voice recognition software that transcribes the answer to text. The agent still has to spend extra time reviewing the answer to make sure it “sounds right” and doesn't have any grammar or text errors.

Timelines are a very important issue. Customers may not want to talk to anyone right then, but they do want an answer. Generally, e-mail messages should be answered by the next business day. If the e-mail message answer takes longer the customer may contact

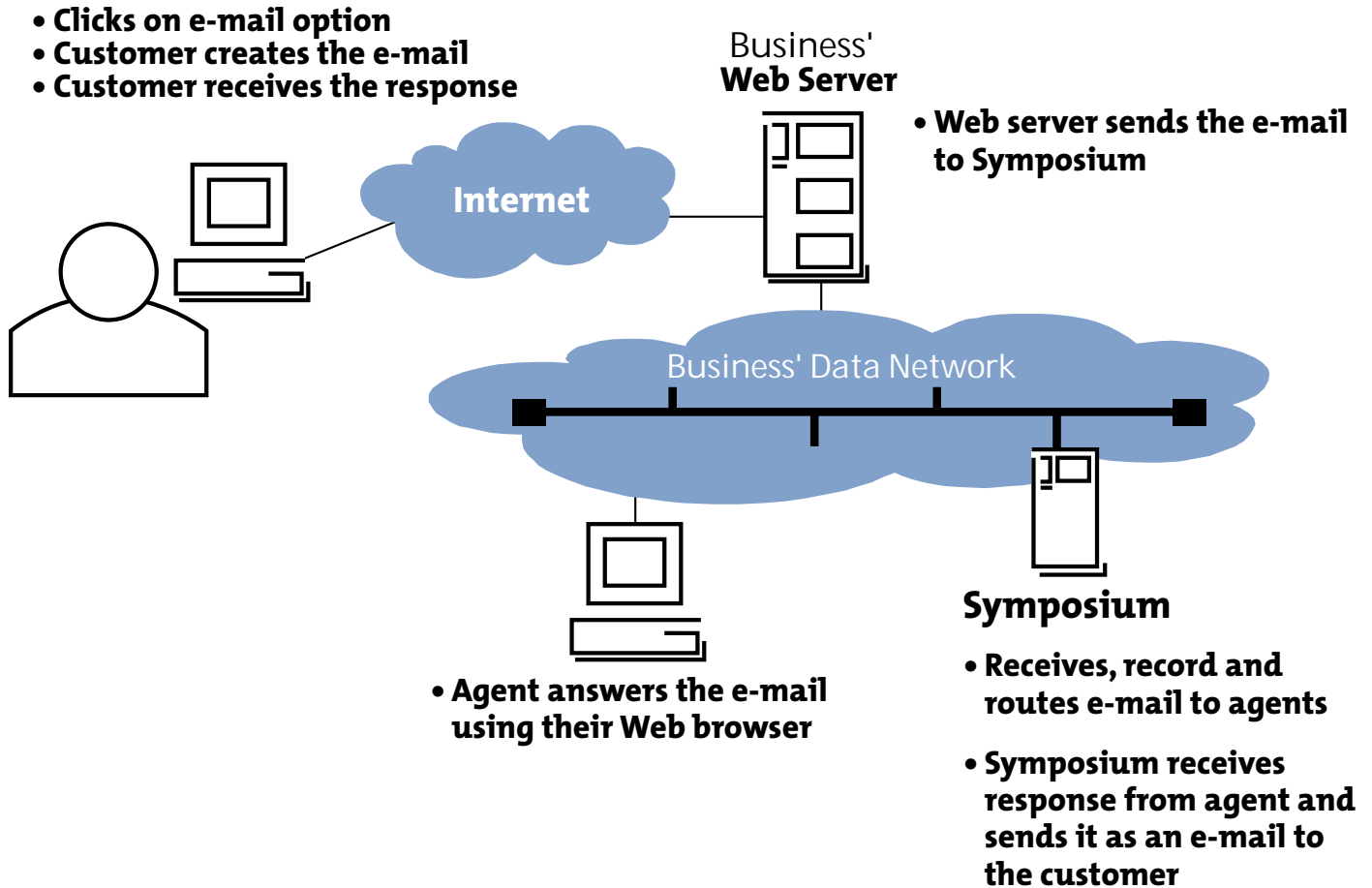


Figure 2: The E-mail Process in an Internet Call Centre

the traditional call centre. The call centre must then pick up the cost for handling the request via e-mail and by telephone call or calls. This result in a cost for handling both the e-mail and the call centre call – not to mention an unhappy customer who had to ask the question twice.

Hopefully, the customer's question can be answered with one e-mail, but you also need to support back-and-forth e-mail. The customer may see the first response and generate a second e-mail. You need to make sure that the same person is available to answer or that the new person answering has access to the entire message trail. Symposium keeps track of the message automatically.

While there are many issues related to implementing e-mail, it is a function that customers are increasingly expecting at Web sites. You need to at least add an e-mail function to your

Web pages or run the risk of seeming unresponsive.

Text Chat

Text chat can be an effective way to communicate with the customer. Text chat is like a telephone call, but instead of talking, the two people are typing their dialog. Many customers are familiar and comfortable with text chat because of their experience in forums and chat rooms. Figure 3 shows the process involved in conducting a text chat:

1. The customer selects the Chat button. The Web server then sends a form to the customer to ask questions. This information, along with the text chat request, is sent to the Symposium server. The Web server also sends down a small Java program, called an applet, to the customer's browser that sets up the text chat window.

Chat can also be performed in a pure HTML page.

2. The Symposium server receives the request for the text chat and determines the best agent to handle the request. (Symposium determines the best agent by knowing which Web page the customer was on, and if additional questions were asked.) Symposium then notifies the agent that a chat session is requested. The Symposium server can also send the agent the Web page your customer is currently viewing, allowing the agent to view the same page as the customer.
3. The agent then starts a text chat conversation that flows through the Symposium server. This allows the Symposium server to keep track of what is going on and to manage the process.

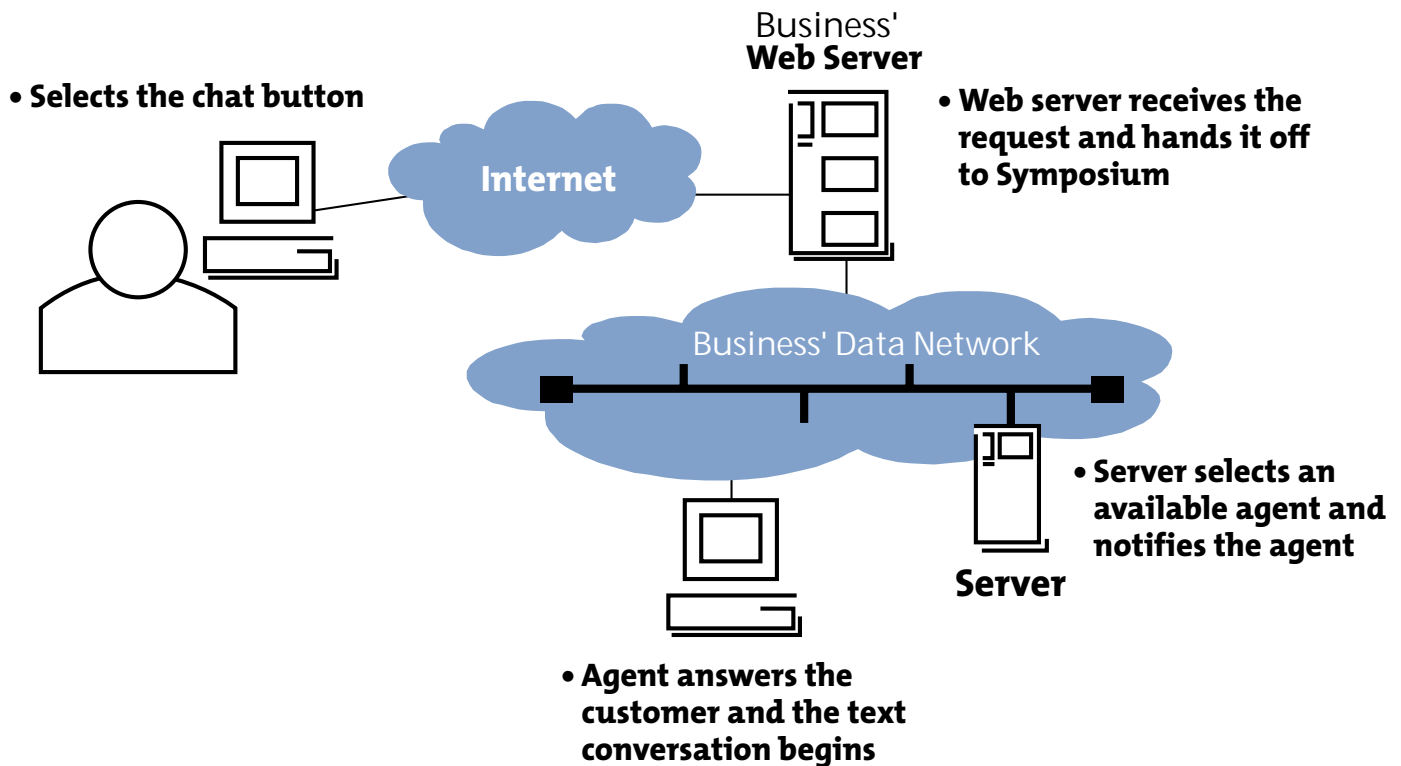


Figure 3: Conducting a Text Chat.

It is critical for management control that the chat conversation flow through the Symposium server and not directly between the agent and the customer. The Symposium server can capture the “conversation” and allow the **Internet Call Centre manager** to audit the conversations, improve the process and view areas where automation or Web page improvements can reduce the conversation time.

With the Symposium server, the agent can also walk the customer through additional Web pages while conducting the Web chat. This allows the agent to direct the conversation to the right Web page and provides the opportunity to sell the customer additional items that complement their original interest.

The biggest advantage to the customer is that a text chat provides the “give and take” of a telephone conversation, without requiring a second telephone

line or the bandwidth needed to support the voice connection over their Internet connection. Text chats also provide advantages for you, such as:

- Toll charge savings.
- A cost-effective way to service worldwide customers and reduce their reluctance to contact you. Toll-free numbers are common in North America, but in many countries they are not available or it's not practical for the business to offer them. These customers must therefore call on their own, reducing the chance they will contact the business and buy products. Text chat offers an excellent compromise in servicing these customers.

There are also possible downsides to text chats, such as:

- The skill level of the agent handling the text chat needs to be greater **than a telephone call centre agent**. The agent needs to be able to type effectively and have good writing skills. Text chat requires the same skill set as an agent answering e-mail, but the agent does not have the time luxury that the e-mail agent has. With e-mail, the person answering has time to think. In a text chat the agent must answer immediately, putting more pressure on the agent.
- A text chat conversation takes longer than a telephone call. People can talk and communicate faster than they can when they have to type all their answers. This drives up the cost of handling the customer inquiry.

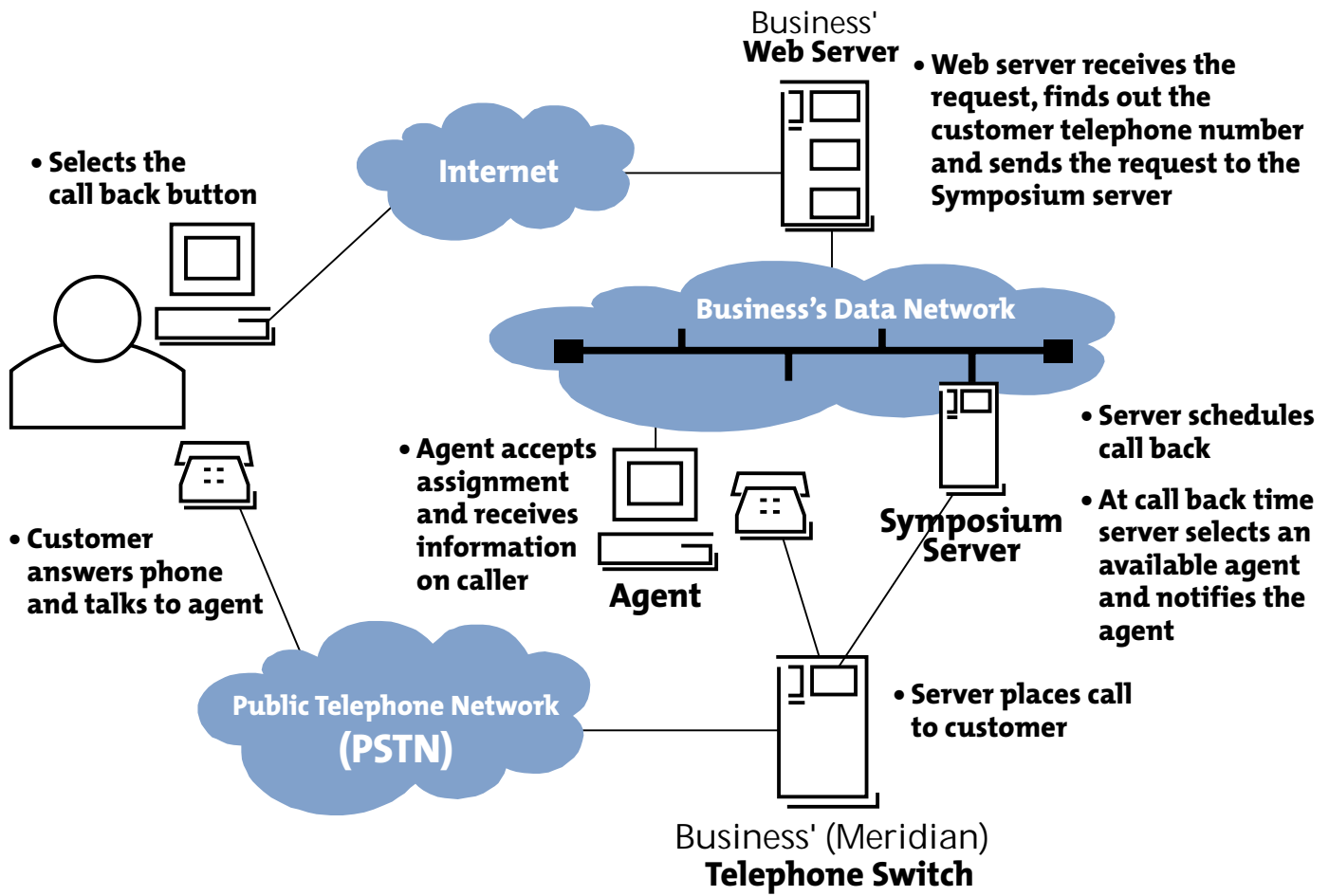


Figure 4: The Call Back Process.

Call Back

Customers may want to talk to someone at the company but can't at a particular time. They may have only one telephone line (which they are using to access the Internet), don't have the time to talk now, or want to do some more research on their own before they talk to someone. The best solution for these customers is to have someone call them back at a more convenient time. The Internet solution to this issue is Call Back.

Call Back simply has the Web server take information from the customer as to when it is best to call back. The Internet Call Centre then has an agent call the customer back at that time.

Figure 4 shows how Call Back works. The steps are:

1. The customer clicks on the Call Back button. The Web server sends down a form that asks the customer for a telephone number and the time to call back. This information is then sent to the Web server.
2. The Web server sends the Call Back information to the Symposium server along with other information: which page the customer was viewing, customer's area of interest, and relevant products and services.
3. The Symposium server schedules the Call Back. When the Call Back time arrives, Symposium selects a free agent with the right skills (in terms of the relevant products and services). The server notifies the agent.
4. The agent prepares for the Call Back and then tells the Symposium server he/she is ready.
5. The Symposium server then places the call by interfacing to the telephone switch. The telephone switch connects the customer call and the agent together.
6. The customer answers and the Call Back proceeds.

A company using Call Back needs to make sure that its telephone agreement with the carrier is not adversely affected by a shift to Call Backs instead of the customer dialing the toll-free number. If the agreement with the carrier requires a set toll-free volume, then the business needs to address how the change will effect the agreement. Also, the business needs to make sure it receives a good rate on outbound calls, as now the business is dialing the customer, instead of the customer dialing the business.

Call Me

The last variation on the Internet Call Centre is the “Call Me” button. The customer is on the Internet and wants to talk to the business immediately. There are two ways the conversation can be set up. First, the Call Centre agent to call the customer using the normal telephone network and the customer’s regular phone. The agent and the customer can see the same Web pages and talk on the telephone. This is a good solution when the customer does not use their telephone line to reach the Internet – a common situation when the customer is a large business, has multiple phone lines or is using new services such as a cable modem.

The “Call Me” option uses the regular telephone network works much the same as for the “Call Back” situation described above. The difference is that the Symposium server starts the call as soon as it hears from the Web server instead of waiting for the Call Back time.

There are many situations where customers use their only telephone line to reach the Internet. In this situation, the call has to be placed over the Internet. This is referred to as Voice over IP (VoIP). The customer receives both the Web pages and the telephone call over the Internet. Figure 5 shows what happens in this situation. The steps are:

1. The customer clicks on the Call Me button.
2. The Web server receives the request and can send a form back to the customer asking questions about the call, and also questioning the customer to make sure that the call will work. The questioning could include questions about the speed of the customer’s modem and the software being used. The Web server then sends the request to the Symposium server.
3. The Symposium server selects the best agent available and sends the request to the agent.
4. The agent accepts the request. The Symposium server also sends the

agent information on the customer, including the Web page being viewed.

5. The Symposium server signals the telephone switch to set up an Internet call with the agent and the customer. The telephone switch uses the IP address of the customer to set up the Voice over IP (VoIP) call.
6. The customer receives the call through the PC and starts the conversation with the agent.
7. The Symposium server monitors activity between the agent and the customer.

Generally, no special software is needed on the customer’s PC for an Internet call. However, a multimedia PC is required, because the process can use Microsoft’s NetMeeting software that comes with the Windows operating system or any H.323 compliant software. Customers using an operating system other than Windows may need special software that can be downloaded over the Internet from the Web server.

An advantage of the Symposium server is that the agent can “take control” of the Web surfing of the customer. The agent can pull up Web pages that appear on both the agent’s and the customer’s screen, allowing the agent to take the customer on a “tour.” This is especially useful for complex problems or selling additional goods and services.

The Call Me option is a very good solution for situations that involve decision making, a complex process, or if there is a possibility of selling additional goods and services. The combination of direct conversation and Web pages makes it a richer experience than just a telephone call. Two examples show why this can be powerful:

- Customers want to order something from the company’s online catalogue. They have a question they can’t find the answer to; without the answer they are reluctant to order the item. They can use the Call Me button to talk to an agent that answers the call, and the agent closes the sale.

While the agent is closing the sale, the agent recommends other items that go with the first one. The agent and customer together go and view those items with the result that additional sales are made.

- Customers call because they are having trouble understanding a procedure – for example, they may be trying to fix a problem on complex machine. The customer is viewing a diagram on the Web page but is having trouble understanding what to do. The agent can “walk” the customer through the procedure. The agent is guaranteed that they and the customer are looking at the same picture since they are using the Web; if there are questions that another Web page can clarify, the agent can show those pages to the customer as they work on the problem. This has advantages over traditional call centre support where the customer may have an outdated diagram. Using the Web guarantees that the agent and the customer are talking about the same diagram.

The Call Me option is a good option but there are some issues that need to be addressed for a successful implementation. These include:

- What happens between the time the customer clicks on the Call Me button and the call starts? It could take a short while for the setup procedure. In that time the customer continues to surf the Web and more questions may arise from visiting different web pages. You must ensure that the agent has the skills to handle a broader scope of questions and can professionally address unexpected inquiries.
- Can the network support good quality voice communications? The quality of the call depends on both the business’ Intranet and the Internet. If either has problems, then the customer may be unhappy with the quality of the call, with the result that it makes a bad impression on the customer; the business may lose the customer. The problem can have many causes including:

- The business' Intranet: The business needs to make sure that its Intranet is able to handle the call. It may be necessary to upgrade to newer switches that implement policy and bandwidth management; a full analysis should be part of the implementation phase. This problem can be addressed by installing faster and better equipment from a vendor like Nortel Networks, or upgrading the speed of the internal connections.
- The Internet: If the call takes a slow path, the result can be poor service. The business has little or no control over how well the Internet works. If this problem exists, the business may want to send a message to the

customer outlining the problem, so that the customer will not blame the business.

- The customer's connection to the Internet: The slower the speed of the connection, the more likely there will be problems. The minimum speed necessary is 28.8, and this speed is really borderline.
- Customer PC problems: While Microsoft NetMeeting software makes this option available there can be problems with the software on the customer's PC. Also, the customer needs to have either a telephone headset connected to the PC or have a microphone and speakers. Any problems on the customer's PC means that the call will not work or the customer

will have a bad experience. This problem is best handled by asking the customer questions before setting up the call.

- A Web Call Me may take longer than a traditional call centre call. The agent and the customer have the richness of the Web that could add additional time to the process. On the positive side, it is an opportunity to sell the customer additional products and services and create a better relationship with the customer.
- The agent needs a higher skill set. The agent has to know all that a traditional call centre agent knows, plus how to direct people through the company's Web site.

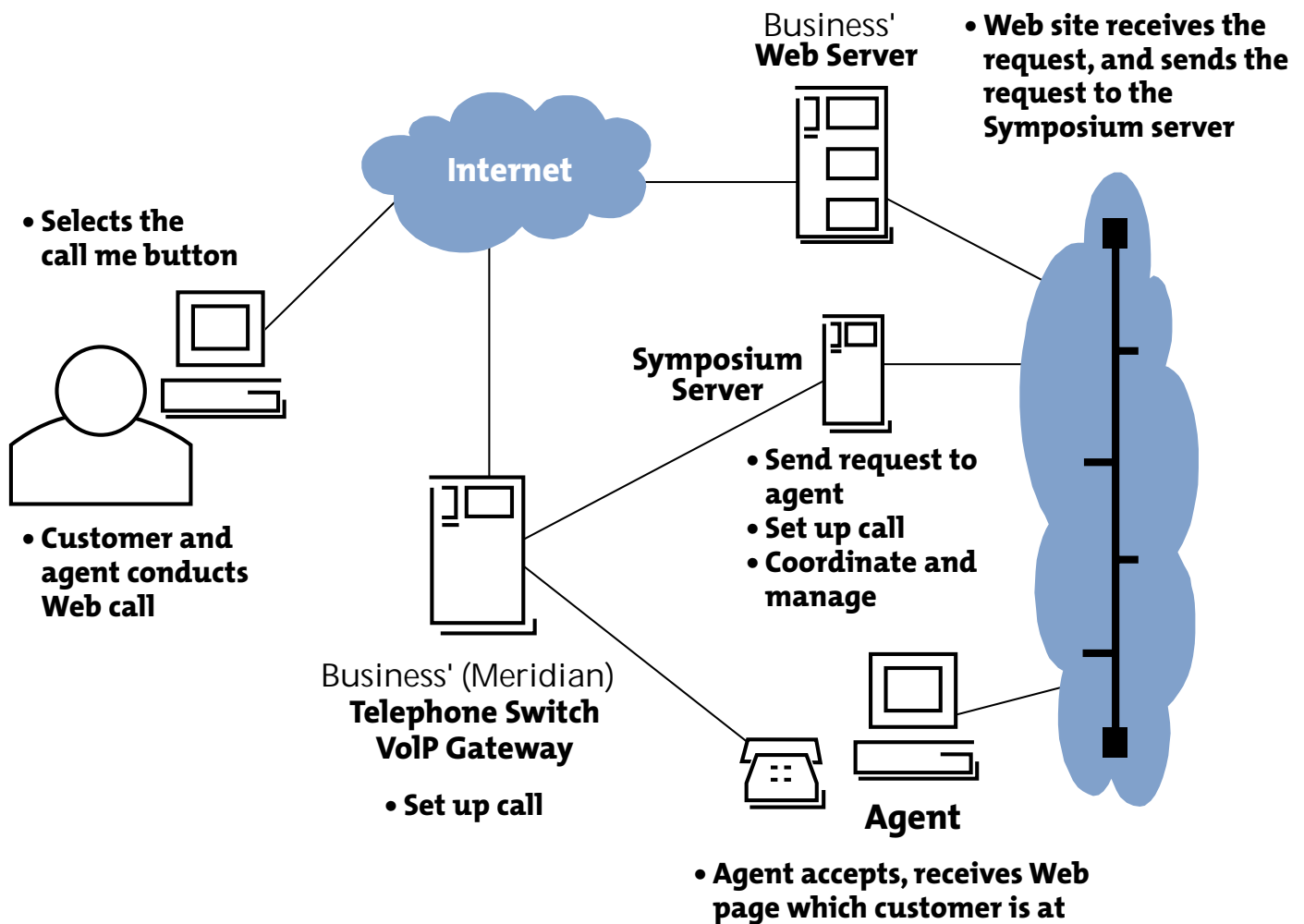


Figure 5: Using the Call Me Button.

Skill-Based Routing

An important part of any call centre is getting the call, chat or e-mail to the person best able to answer the customer's question. This ability is called skill-based routing – sending the customer to the person with the best skills to answer questions. It is important in traditional Call Centres, and is just as important with Internet Call Centre. The business can waste time by having the wrong person struggle with an answer, and leave the customer with a bad impression.

In an Internet Call Centre, the skill-based router needs to be able to understand what Web page the person was looking at, and interpret text-based answers. The skill-based router must be able to “read” the e-mail and determine what the customer is asking. It is only then that it can send it to the right person.

The task is improved by having the customer answer questions on a form. When the customer clicks on the Internet Call Centre – for either e-mail, text chat, Call Back or Call Me – the Web site send down a set of questions. The answers may be “yes or no” answers, or free form. This information is then sent to the Symposium server, which uses the information to decide who should answer the call. The questions are analogous to what happens with Interactive Voice Response, where they answered by pressing a number key on the telephone. But with the Internet, the question can be richer, allowing free-form text answers.

Putting it all together

Building an Internet Call Centre does not mean selecting just one of the options. Depending on what the business is trying to accomplish, the correct solution may be to implement all the options. It depends on what the business is trying to accomplish with its Internet Call Centre. Businesses that choose to offer multiple options could have a “Talk” button. When the customer clicks on the “Talk” button, the Web server sends down a menu

with the different options. The customer selects the best one for their situation.

Which businesses are good candidates for offering the full range of options? There is no one test or correct answer since it depends on the business' goals, but a few examples will help illustrative good candidates:

- Complex processes where a customer might likely make a mistake
- Sales opportunities where the value or cost of the product is high
- When there is a possibility for making additional sales
- When the business' strategy is to make customer service a high priority.

Businesses may not want to offer the same choice on every Web page. For example, if the customer is involved in an activity that does not justify the expense of talking to an agent, then the e-mail option may be offered. Only when the customer is at a point in the browsing that justifies the more expensive “real time conversation” is the call or text chat offered. The best strategy will vary from business to business and from activity to activity; businesses must think through the strategy that best suits their situation.

The Nortel Networks Advantage

Nortel Networks Symposium is a leader in providing Internet Call Centre. Some of the reasons businesses should strongly consider using it as their Internet Call Centre solution include:

- Nortel Networks' portfolio of Symposium solutions works for small organisations and large businesses. As businesses and their needs for an Internet Call Centre grow, Nortel Networks Symposium can grow along. Symposium solutions are server-based software applications: a business only needs to pay for pieces relevant to its particular needs. As the business and the role of the Internet Call Centre grow, the

business can add functionality to the call centre by implementing pieces of the Symposium portfolio. Also, Symposium does not have to run all its functionality on just one physical server. Multiple servers can be tied together creating an Internet Call Centre that scales with the business' needs.

- Nortel Networks Symposium has the industry's best Internet Call Centre skill-based routing software, bringing the skill-based routing to the Internet age. Not only can it handle Internet information – Web page, answer and text – it can be integrated with traditional call centre skill-based routing. This means that a business that has a traditional telephone call centre and an Internet Call Centre needs only one skill-based router. This saves on cost and management time, but more importantly it means that if the same people are answering both calls, there is no confusion caused by two different skill-based routers sending the request to the same agent. Without this integration, the business may need two different call centre staffs, with resultant management headaches and cost.
- Building a successful Internet Call Centre requires analysing the business' needs and understanding Internet Call Centre technology. Nortel Networks' Professional Services group is adept at putting together all the pieces into a successful package. With Nortel Networks' global reach, it doesn't matter where in the world the Internet Call Centre is – support is just a call away.



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